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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Youth Parliament Takes on Conflict

Youth Parliamentarians meet to discuss conflict management and social issues in Afghanistan



Photo: USAID D & G

Afghan youth took part in a USAID and Afghanistan National Assembly sponsored Youth Parliamentary session in June. Nearly 90 youth, almost half of them young women, participated in the event.

The APAP project provided technical assistance to the Youth Parliament by guiding them through the legislative resolution process, plenary debate and the proper committee hearing procedures.

Eighty-nine young people, including 40 young women, participated in the 2010 Afghanistan Youth Parliament (AYP) session held in June 2010. The three day event, organized by Afghanistan's National Assembly with the USAID Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Project (APAP), convened at Parliament. The agenda focused on conflict management in Afghanistan, while also debating social issues, such as the prohibitive cost of Afghan marriages and how it impacts the youth.

Demonstrating their inclusive thinking and advanced understanding of parliamentary procedures, the student members elected Florence Daqiq as their Speaker, following a no confidence vote in their first choice (the change was prompted by the first speaker's divisive and inflammatory inaugural speech). Ms. Daqiq's election demonstrated the confidence the aspiring legislators have in female leadership and the AYP's commitment to peaceful resolution of differences.

"It was an honor to be elected Speaker of the AYP. I was humbled by the Youth Parliamentarians' confidence and trust in my leadership to achieve our goals," said Ms. Daqiq. "My election to the position of Speaker is proof that women have a role to play in the democratization of Afghanistan. Women are capable of holding the same positions as men."

USAID's APAP project provided technical assistance to the Youth Parliament, by guiding them through the legislative resolution process, plenary debate, and proper committee hearing procedures. After two plenary sessions, the young legislators applied their new skills to draft and debate a set of resolutions. Their resolutions called for the peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict through negotiations and a law capping excessive marriage related costs. The Youth Parliament closed by resolving to have their resolutions forwarded to the National Assembly for consideration.

"The AYP program taught me to be tolerant of other people's ideas. Through peaceful debate; we can resolve and settle our differences. I hope the National Assembly will take our resolutions seriously," said Ms Daqiq at the end of the session.